

## Meeting Notes

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Eastern Senior High School Community Forum  
May 7, 2009

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### Presentation

The *Community Engagement* process will include:

- Monthly Academic (PAT) and Facilities (SIT) planning meetings.
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade focus groups with feeder middle schools
- Conversations with current EHS student government
- Quarterly Community Forums

*PAT update:*

Three major themes have been voiced repeatedly throughout our study of academic options for Eastern:

- Rigorous Academics
  - Preparing all students for college (so that they at least have the option)
  - Offering relevant experiences in career preparation
- Exposure to the World
- Small learning communities which can help provide:
  - Core relationships between adults and students
  - Flexibility to adapt to the needs of all students

*SIT Update:*

Tony Robinson (Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization) and Teresa Luther (Project Manager, Architecture Firm) presented updates on current and future Eastern facilities planning.

- The SIT has recommended and OPEFM has decided to fully vacate the building for renovations next year, and to provide modular units on the current grounds for next year's students. These units will be clustered by grade and will have internal hallways so that students can move from one class to the next inside the units. Brochures on the units including pictures and potential layout on the school grounds were distributed.
- The facilities plans for the renovation include flexible options to accommodate the academic focus that has not yet been finalized. One possibility under discussion is the integration of administrative spaces throughout the building to foster adult-student interaction and the potential for small learning communities.

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## Discussion

### Community Member Comments:

#### *Topic: Current Students/ Resources*

- The students here now deserve everything we're building for the future Eastern – the same resources and opportunity.
- Build on what is currently here, don't forget about grades 11,12 next year.
- Concern/ priority: Offering challenging courses for 11,12 graders next year and the 12<sup>th</sup> graders in 2010 while also providing enough support and appropriate courses for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade entering in 2010.
  - Response: We are currently building a menu of quality elective and looking at AP courses appropriate for current students.
- Concern: Are we "stuck" with per pupil spending limitations over the next few years while there are less than four grade levels?
  - Answer: Per-pupil budget will still be the formula, but that doesn't mean that the school will be under-resourced. Note Phelps as an example: with only a 9<sup>th</sup> grade this year, they are incredibly well-resourced.
  - Follow-up Q: Phelps has a limited scope of focus (Construction, Architecture, Engineering)—does that inherently stretch a limited budget? Can you still serve diverse student interests with funding for a partial student body?
  - Answer: Yes. It will not be easy, and we will need to be very thoughtful, but it is possible.
- Partnerships in the community can also help supplement per-pupil resources.

#### *Topic: Priorities and Ideas for Eastern HS*

- Priority: Occupational Training that is rigorous and well-respected in the community.
- Priority: Diverse options so that students don't have to stay completely within one "track." (i.e. a student studying for EMT certification could still take a foreign language class)
- Priority: Bring the Arts back to Eastern.
- Idea: "Green" Science as academic theme, and as focus for the building renovations

#### *Topic: Future Students*

- Look beyond the DCPS feeder schools for focus groups and recruiting efforts – there are hundreds of neighborhood students attending charters and private schools who would love to attend a quality public high school.

#### *More Comments:*

- Programs = People. Adults working closely with individual students encouraging them and helping them explore their interests will make a deep impact on the students – maybe even more of an impact than what academic "theme" they study.
- Question: Can DCPS distribute information on what programs and facilities are already at Eastern so we know what we have to build on? (Response: Yes.)